

New Cuban Revenue Perfins and Official Punch Perfins

by Robert Littrell (#3992)

In the May/June 2014 issue of *The Perfins Bulletin* I lamented the availability of Cuban items has drastically been reduced due to eBay and PayPal misinterpreting the Cuban embargo to mean that all sales of Cuban material were proscribed. That remains unchanged, so one has to scramble for new material. For the past couple of years I have remained in contact by email with a retired philatelist in Havana who has from time to time found some pretty nice items. Now he has outdone himself by significant finds in the area of revenue perfins and official punch perfins.



First, he sent me a couple of *Recibos y Cuentas* (Receipts and Accounts) stamps from 1886 through which a rather crude "E" was punched. One of these is shown at left. Since the stamps were separated from the original paper they were placed upon, I can only guess

that the perfin was applied after the stamp was affixed to the document. The meaning of the "E" is likewise unknown.

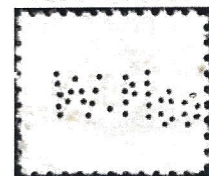
My friend also sent me a driver's license booklet from 1946. Each year one renewed his certification and a revenue stamp was applied to a page. In this case, the base stamps were *Venta Bruta* (gross sales tax) stamp of 1930. They were later overprinted to become 10 centavos *Casa de los Tribunales* (Housing of the Courts) stamps of 1939. The revenue stamps were applied to legal documents to collect funds for a building to house the various courts of law in Havana. Shown below are stamps on two pages of the driver's license to which an official punch perfin was applied through the stamps and booklet paper. I am sorry to say however that I have been unable to discern the exact letters or meaning of the perfin punch.



Next, he supplied me with several of each of the following perfins on *Timbre Nacional* (National Stamp) revenue stamps from the early 1950's. The stamps were from the 1937 series. A black overprint "RECARGO" (Surcharge) was applied later. These stamps are shown at right.



The first of these is from 1950 and has a very crudely perfined "Eco." through it. The meaning (or company name) of Eco is unknown.



The second is from the 1951 *Timbre Nacional* (overprinted) series and the perfin in it is "W.Nco" Although I have four examples of this one, each seems to have a missing perf on the second letter "N". The company is unknown.

The third is an official punch on a 1952 *Timbre Nacional* (overprinted) series stamp. This stamp is shown at left. The perfin is "Rep.C." which stands for Republic of Cuba.



So this friendship has turned out to be profitable for Cuban perfin knowledge. I thank him for these finds.

My other source for Cuban material is from Delcampe Auctions. But watch out! If you pay for a Delcampe winning through PayPal, you had better not have the word "Cuba" in the invoice. I have not had anything ultimately blocked from purchase, but most times the matter is put on hold for a few days

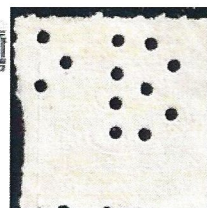
pending PayPal's "review" of the transaction. Recently I was sent an email from PayPal stating: "PayPal's Compliance Department has reviewed your account and identified activity that may be in violation of United States regulations administered by the Department of the Treasury's Office of

Cuban Perfins (cont.)

Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).” I was asked to provide “Purpose of payment attempted on March 26, 2014 in the amount of €5.00, including a complete and detailed explanation of the goods or services you intended to purchase.” That is the kind of thing that gets you rattled. My explanation was that I was attempting to purchase a 1939 cover sent to Germany some 23 years before the 1962 embargo of Cuban goods. I promptly received a follow-up email stating my account was back in good standing.

Two Cuban revenue perfin items have come my way through Delcampe recently. One is a Series of 1919 *Timbre Nacional* stamp with a large “B” for a perfin (upper right). Some other letter precedes the “B” but there are not enough perfs to tell what that letter is.

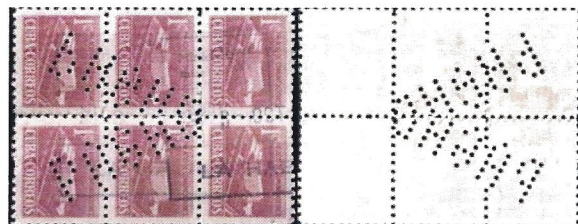
The second Delcampe purchase was a block of 18 one centavo *Sobretasa Postal* (Postal Tax) stamps of 1958. A front and back view of six of those stamps is shown (lower right). You can see that the stamps were affixed and folded over on a sheet of paper in



such a way that the perfin **PAGADO** (Paid) went through the stamps twice, producing an image and a mirror image. A date stamp of “La

Habana 3 Oct. 1960” appears on the sheet.

So between my friend in Havana and Delcampe Auction, I am getting some material. Seven new revenue perfins is not too bad. Now comes the hard part of figuring out what it all means.



A Good Laugh

By Robert Littrell (#3992)

I laughed out loud. I couldn’t believe what I was seeing. To be sure it was a plain ole’ perfin cover with pattern **A218** (APW/Co). It was the company name that gave me a start. If you look it up in the *Catalog of United States Perfins*, you see that “C” rated pattern belongs to the Albany Perforated Wrapping Paper Company, Albany, NY.

Some internet research led me to discover that commercially available, factory made toilet paper was produced in 1857 and was sold in loose, flat sheets. Seth Wheeler obtained a patent on rolled and perforated wrapping paper in 1871. After a failed attempt to produce it, he founded the A.P.W. Paper Co. in 1878 in Albany, NY. It advertised that it had originated the idea of selling paper in perforated rolls for bathroom tissue. It was “wrapped” around a central tube, sold in plain brown wrappers and called “perforated wrapping paper” instead of “toilet paper” because the word “toilet” was too sensitive a word to be used by 19th century Victorians.

To understand what was so funny, you have to understand my dear, departed mother who was born in 1914, two years after this envelope was posted. She always referred to toilet paper as “APW”. When I, as a boy, asked her what that meant, she said, “A Pleasant Wipe”. For more than 60 years I have labored under that misconception. Now I know better! And now you know how valuable the study of perfins can be!

